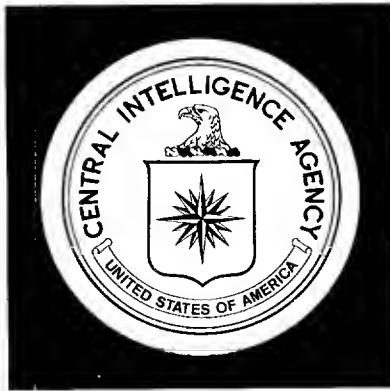


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Top Secret

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15 December 1972

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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A023400040002-6

15 December 1972

Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

JAPAN-VIETNAM: Tokyo seeks more prominent role in postwar Vietnam. (Page 1)

JAPAN-VIETNAM: Despite several rebuffs, the Japanese continue to seek a role in postwar arrangements for Vietnam.

Although Japanese leaders never contemplated offering troops for a peace-keeping force because of popular and constitutional limitations, a consensus is developing within the Japanese Government in favor of a greater leadership role in Southeast Asia. Tokyo clearly feels under some domestic political pressure to play a role in postwar Vietnam political arrangements if it is to be a major contributor to postwar rehabilitation efforts.

As part of the effort toward a more active role, the Japanese Government recently suggested to the US that Tokyo would introduce a resolution in the UN endorsing an international conference and truce arrangements. At the urging of the US, however, Tokyo has decided not to propose such a UN resolution at this time.

The Tanaka government is now looking for other ways to play a more prominent role. In a recent press conference, Prime Minister Tanaka maintained that settlement of the problems in the region could not be feasible without Japan's participation. Although Tanaka did not appear to have a well-planned proposal in mind, he has suggested an Asian parley following a cease-fire to discuss political and economic reconstruction problems. The Japanese Government has also discussed publicly the possibility of sponsoring an Indochina reconstruction fund to grant direct assistance and long-term, low-interest loans to North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

South Vietnam clearly would be receptive to postwar Japanese involvement. [redacted]

[redacted] A Japanese Foreign Office official has said that Tokyo has recently received several

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indications that Hanoi is not enthusiastic about Japanese participation in an international peace conference, allegedly because bases in Japan had been used by the US to support attacks on Vietnam and because Tokyo had been giving "too much" economic assistance to South Vietnam. Despite these indications of Hanoi's unhappiness over a possible Japanese political role, Hanoi reportedly is interested in Japanese aid for economic rehabilitation.

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15 Dec 72

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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Next 5 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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